

Bethel Town Meeting Committee Minutes of December 21, 2015

Present: Jean Burnham, Neil Brooks, Rick Benson, Davis Dimock, Victoria Weber, Rebecca Stone.

The meeting began at 3:36 and we approved the minutes of 11-19-15.

- 1- We approved a **Summary** of our 2015 activities for the 2015 Bethel Town Report.
- 2- We do want to again have a half page in the town report with information on attending town meeting. Rebecca will update last year's version.
- 3- There is interest in town in having a **meal on town meeting day**, perhaps organized by the group that has put on several free meals. Rick will encourage them to go ahead and contact both the school and select boards.
- 4- **Bethel Operator's Manual:** Creating this guide is our main goal for 2016. We clarified our procedure: we will each work on several sections, changing if need be to fit Bethel and focusing on having the same amount of verbiage, OR LESS as the Middlesex version. We will email our drafts to each other and then go over them at our meetings. We want to focus on opportunities to volunteer in Bethel. Once we have a complete draft we will be able to make it available to citizens to get their input and ideas.

Following is a chart of who is responsible for which sections, based on the Middlesex template:

Who	Middlesex page #	Topics
Jean	2-5	Administration, property taxes, dog licenses...
Davis	6, 7	Planning and Zoning
Jean	8, 9	Se[ctic, landowner issues, Conservation Commission
Rick	9	Cemeteries
Davis	10	Roads
Rick	11	Fire + Emergency; law enforcement
Jean	12-14	Voting: A Primer; VT Voter Rights; State + Federal representatives; How to run for local office; Town Meeting Committee; annual Town Report
Rick	15, 18, 19, 20	Local Democracy + you; Basic Parliamentary Motions; Voters' guide to Town Mtg. Procedures; Civility; Getting articles on the warning. Role of moderator
Rick	20	Doing Business in Bethel
Neil	21-24	Schools
Victoria	16, 17, 25	Town map; Historical Society
Lisa	26, 27	Recreation; Forests + trails
Who	Middlesex	Topics

	page #	
Ola	28, 29	Health and Human services
Lisa	29	Libraries
Rebecca	30	News + Communication opportunities
Rick	31	Worship
Lisa	31	Waste + Recycling
Rebecca + everyone	32-33	Calendar; A year in the Life of Bethel
Victoria	most pages	Organize photo contest

As we make this guide our own, we should all be looking for aspects of life in Bethel that we want to include that are not covered in the Middlesex manual.

- 5- **Paying for the Manual/ Grants.** Rick analogized our creation of the Manual to the Planning Commission's creating a new Bethel Town Plan every 5 years. They create it, and then give it to the Select board to hold a hearing and to approve it. Victoria added that the Planners usually get a small grant to cover expenses of town plan creation, and the town offices administers that grant.

The select board had asked us to investigate grants and to get back to them. Before we do that we want to ask National Life Company if they might pay for the printing (the largest expense) as they did for the Middlebury Manual.

Our other 2 possibilities are the Vermont Community Foundation grant, and the Mascoma Savings Bank Sponsorship grant.

- 6- We recognize that the Bethel Operator's Manual will not be an official town publication. It is a **community project** to create a guide to educate people about local government and to opportunities for people to take part in town and community activities. Basically we intend it to be a guide to everything you wanted to know about living in your town.

We would like the Town of Bethel web page to link to it, but we'd like to post it on a separate website that we can manage and update, so that the electronic version of the document remains alive and useful.

Once we have a draft, we will be able to invite input from citizens. We plan to have a poster and a table about it at Town Meeting. We will be able to put it out for review using Facebook or front Porch Forum.

- 7- **Discussion of 3-or 5-member selectboards.**

In March Bethel will vote on whether the Bethel Selectboard should be changed to a 5-member board. To educate voters about what this implies, we will work with the Bethel Revitalization Initiative to hold a potluck discussion on the topic on Thursday, February 11th or 18th. Rebecca will check with Todd Sears to see if he will create a chart of the various pros and cons of such a change. Rick will try to identify some selectmen from towns with 5-member boards and a town manager who might speak at the gathering.

Our next meeting will be January 25th at 3:30 pm. Meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Victoria Weber, Secretary, December 29, 2015.